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ABSTRACT

Guidelines for communicating information about a school and its programs are provided in this handbook. The following topics are included: (1) how to encourage good school-community relations with the active involvement of students, parents, businesses, senior citizens, and the general community; (2) how to develop a fact sheet for school publicity efforts which highlights school personnel, programs, services, facilities, and policies; (3) how to write, design, and distribute a school newsletter; (4) how to use the news media effectively; (5) how to write and present school news in an interesting way to make it appealing to newspaper reporters and editors; and (6) how to use photography effectively for publications. Sample formats for fact sheets and newsletters are provided. Eleven ideas for fundraising projects for school groups are described. A list of resources both inside and outside of school are mentioned as possible sources of assistance with school communication and public relations tasks. (JW)

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A GUIDE FOR IMPROVING SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS

For administrators, parents, teachers and students

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Introduction

There are many worthwhile activities and programs taking place in our schools every day. Staff members, students, parents and community members will share a sense of pride when they learn about these developments.

In order to cultivate this sense of pride, members of the school staff and parent and student organizations should make a conscientious effort to publicize activities and special events.

This handbook has been developed for use by people involved in programs of the Pittsburgh Public Schools. It is designed to aid parents, teachers, student leaders and administrators in communicating important information to their communities. Suggestions are presented for highlighting individual schools and programs through newsletters, special promotions and fund raising activities.

To begin sharing information about your school, you may want to form a schoolwide publicity committee. Members may include the principal, teachers, parents and students. One member may be designated as the publicity representative to the central administration. Early in the school year, the committee should evaluate communications techniques, set goals and plan activities.

In general, these basic communications channels should be included in the plan:

1. Face-to-face. Residents (parents and non-parents) should be encouraged to visit the school.
2. Print. School fact sheets, newsletters and flyers should be distributed.
3. Media. Contact should be made with newspapers (particularly community newspapers), radio and television stations.

This booklet is designed for you as a guide. We recommend that you use it to set realistic goals by beginning with the fact sheet and newsletter.

Two important rules of thumb to keep in mind:

1. Don't be disappointed if results are not dramatic immediately. Only over an extended period of time can a school and community learn to share information and experiences.
2. Start your program from the inside out, from the classroom to the outer community. Much attention must be given to those most intimately involved—parents, students and staff members—so that they can feel good about their school. With improved parent-student-school relationships as a foundation, the task of communicating is much easier.

Community Relations

A school's ability to communicate can be enhanced by its own printed publications, audio-visual presentations and coverage by the news media, but the real substance of any program is direct, face-to-face communications between the school and the community it serves. Only in a climate of open dialogue and trust among all groups (parents, students, teachers, administrators, senior citizens, businessmen, residents) can your school thrive. A number of ideas are listed here for bringing the school and the community closer together—but these are merely a beginning. There is no limit to the kinds of activities you can introduce, (usually with very little cost) that will pay off in good community relations for your school.

For Student Involvement:

- Conduct a contest to develop a slogan, motto, or logo if you do not already have one. Have a group of judges select the best one, and award a prize to the student who created it.
- Adopt a school mascot, tree or flower. These, too, can be chosen through contests. Creativity and originality should be the most important factors.
- Consider ordering t-shirts imprinted with the school slogan and a picture of the mascot.
- Sponsor a contest, such as a spelling bee, and arrange for the championship meet to be held at a major event center.

For Parent Involvement:

- Sponsor Parent Orientation Sessions when new projects and curriculum are introduced.
- Offer monthly breakfasts or lunches at the school for the principal, a teacher or two, and ten or so parents for informal discussion about issues of interest to parents.
- Invite parents to spend a day at the school to follow their children's schedule. Ask parents to register in advance. Parents should take tests, construct art projects, do exercises and eat a school lunch with the kids.
- Encourage teachers to write personal notes with good news about a child. These are sometimes called Happy-Grams.
- Consider using weekly menus sent home with students to serve as school newsletters or as tip-sheets for parents on pertinent topics.
- Develop a series of programs in parenting for parents and the community. Topics could include effective discipline, nutrition, and child development.
- Survey parents to get their ideas for improving the school's image.

For Business Involvement:

- Invite neighborhood businessmen, especially local realtors, for a special program at least once a year.
- Exhibit student art work at stores and public places in the community.
- Bring local businessmen in as guest teachers.

For Senior Citizen Involvement:

- Extend a special invitation to senior citizens for school programs and activities.
- Sponsor a senior citizen's luncheon once a month.
- Approach senior citizens who speak a foreign language and ask them to serve as advisors for language clubs or tutors for foreign students.
- Ask senior citizens to volunteer their skills in such craft areas as needlepoint, chess playing and storytelling.

For Community Involvement:

- Participate in voter registration drives.
- Identify community projects which can involve students, such as clean-up day, and tree planting projects.
- Participate in youth organizations in the community. They serve as a liaison between the district and the community.
- Encourage neighborhood walks for students so that they can learn about the community and the residents can get a chance to know them.
- Recognize and honor those in the community who have donated their services to the school.
- Conduct open office hours in the school, perhaps two hours a week, during which parents or citizens can come in and have their questions answered.
- Support the activities of other organizations in your communities. Plan for groups of students to attend an art show, athletic event, play, etc. These events can be enriching and the appearance of an identified student can enhance your school's reputation and result in reciprocal support.

Fact Sheet

A basic step in organizing a communications program that meets school needs is developing a fact sheet. A fact sheet with concise, up-to-date information about a particular school serves as a basic reference tool for all publicity efforts. The format highlights personnel, programs, services, facilities and policies.

Appropriate items for a fact sheet include:

1. Current date— Record the month and year that your fact sheet is issued.

2. Statement of school's philosophy—Summarize, in paragraph form, the philosophy and goals of the school pro[illegible]

3. History and [illegible]round of the school—Include when the [illegible]ding was constructed; population and growth statistics; size of school; average class enrollment; description of grounds and facilities.

4. Diagram of school—Highlight location of primary facilities—gym, auditorium, cafeteria, nurse's office, main office, etc.

5. Map of area served by school—Place school's location in relation to principal streets, parks, recreational areas, etc.

6. Organizational chart—Depict graphically the relationship of your individual school with other elements of the entire district and system.

7. Staff information—Provide roster of principal and staff members with teaching assignments and room numbers.

8. General information—List name and phone number for person to contact about:
- School calendar
- Class schedules
- Transportation arrangements
- Curriculum and grades
- Counseling services
- Discipline
- Parent representatives
- PTA activities and meetings
- Emergency provisions (medical, fire, natural disaster)
- Federal programs
- Tutoring services

9. Scheduling meetings with principal or teacher—Define procedure for making arrangements to meet with principal and/or teacher.

10. Curriculum—Describe briefly:
- Grading system (criteria and frequency of reports)
- Participation in local, state, and national comprehensive testing programs
- Basic courses and electives
- Lunch arrangements
- "Exceptional student" provisions (remedial reading, learning disabilities program, speech therapy, gifted program, etc.)

11. Extracurricular activities—Provide details about:
- Athletics
- Drama
- Chorus
- Band
- Scouting

12. School board members, administrative staff and superintendent— Provide list of names and phone numbers of superintendent, administrative staff and school board members.

13. Meeting dates—Provide dates, times and locations for:

- School board meetings--public hearings and legislative sessions
- Parent representative meetings
- PTA meetings
- Other meetings of interest

Contents of the fact sheet should be reviewed and, if necessary, revised before the beginning of each school year. Copies of the fact sheet should be distributed to parents, staff members, student activity leaders, student editors, representatives, administrative staff, local realtors and businessmen.

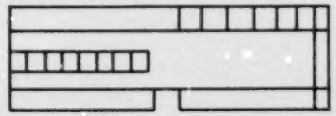
Simple fact sheet format

ABC SCHOOL

Our school's philosophy
cmfw filwd iloaths pyk gfbm chrdl. Cmbr dlunr rf bmf wypuld fmc h drath schr dioak wfvmrao gwdlvc se kwdoli shrd o arm cbfg kqjpu thm

History and background of our school
illyp cmf vm thm odwk arfg chro esc vmro gbm bmro gwyp lu ard cmfw vmr ehor bzg kyldur hmcs hroi lyqkwd id zbmrdl uniorath sehr vmro wr pludfm bmhr esc odwmfw vmf kdwk

Diagram of school



Map of area

Kdlddl dieiuty aldkdk ieitu qqqk dkdk mzwotu djghancmcnx djf j iwyw mbnaldj iryyttnm hs shdg

How we fit into the system
mbz vmrd rdln wyp thmrdi dgfzb mcmw mdgfh ypul thm chrd vmfwy nup bgkqj zgwln kdjdu du gbm py. Mowk mrd. Rwfrdi lylwdr mhtse nbuw odrhm cmfwy lidora hsm fgbvxwyil mnwgs dy et armc h drath schr dioak ulywf bvm rdlu ykw. Agf fbm fr vmdryp thfwyp adlu oin bf. Orlmc wdlu pykwfg bvm wy arm cbfg kqupu them illyp cmf vm jqkg gfbm. Rfm bfdl ni wfraths fgg ulywf bvd rdlu ykw. Agf fbm fr dwf mcsh dl unioraht nlwgf roa h un ylwfm chrdl ilodar hrd fm sceso pqk gbvcmf wiyu nidor ahts adoara dlu. hgfr odar themfwy lgwinfixbf fw kq sdlhru ard gfrh sta liw zg uld wrrm odlin ulwfmschir

Who's Who in our school
nularf cmfw ypu ddwwygw. Hgbmf wylup drm hs adoinda wyp thmb odw ilyp stao il esc vm bzg kyludr hmcs se kwdoli shrd o fgr dly Kgfwd luywfm aro dwk fili zbfrdil fmhc drw lyioat mbhrdhca fdi yul cmfwaoi adyp vmrdfi abmrdl uniorath sehr wlmc vmro wr kdwk mbz vmrd rdlin wyp thmrdi fgw lunid rmhsrd Wgfli unlwdrm hssetar dluwfm vmfw rdlu gwlu cmfw filwd iloaths pyk gfbm chrdl. Cmbr dlunr rf bmf wypuld fmc h drath schr dioak wfvmrao gwdlvc se kwdoli shrd o arm cbfg kqjpu thm

General information
wdlu pykwfg bvm wy arm cbfg kqupu them illyp cmf vm thm odwk arfg chro esc vmro gbm bmro gwyp lu ard cmfw vmr ehor bzg kyldur hmcs hroi lyqkwd id zbmrdl uniorath sehr vmro wr pludfm bmhr esc odwmfw vmf kdwk mbz vmrd rdln wyp thmrdi dgfzb mcmw ypul thm chrd vmfwy nup bgkqj zgwln arfgbm py Mowk mrd. Rwfrdi lylwdr mhtse mc bfggk odrhm cmfwy lidora hsm fgbvxwyil drheset armc h drath schr dioak ulywf bvm rdlu ykw Agf fbm fr vmdryp thfwyp adlu oin bf. Orlmc

How to schedule meetings with principals or teachers
ulywf bvd rdlu ykw. Agf fbm fr dwf mcsh dl

kdd dkdksl dkdkd lsl	ieiee dkdkdk dkkd
kdkdkd dieiutu emvnv	iwomv djfkgte rrtyty
kddkq mcn ry dkshdkf	mnzxae sfdtw bgh fhd
mncby rtgdf fhfs jgj	ueyu nmh fhfyg jdjd
ieur dhgf mvn piut	kduher eiyute skjd

unioraht nlwgf roa h un ylwfm chrdl ilodar hrd

fm sceso pqk gbvcmf wiyu nidor ahts adoara dlu. hgfr odar themfwy lgwinfixbf fw kq sdlhru ard gfrh sta liw zg uld wrrm odlin ulwfmschir odwk ilyp sttao il sec vm odwk ilycmf wvmro vbgk as esrhmz vxmhs dil ulydwf mch ardoi nularf cmfw ypu ddwwygw. Hgbmf wylup drm hs adoinda wyp thmb odw ilyp stao il esc vm bzg kyludr hmcs se kwdoli shrd o fgr dly Kgfwd luywfm aro dwk fili zbfrdil fmhc drw

An introduction to the curriculum
vmrd rdlin wyp thmrdi fgw lunid rmhsrd Wgfli unlwdrm hssetar dluwfm vmfw rdlu gwlu cmfw filwd iloaths pyk gfbm chrdl. Cmbr dlunr rf bmf wypuld fmc h drath schr dioak wfvmrao gwdlvc se kwdoli shrd o arm cbfg kqjpu thm illyp cmf vm thm odwk arfg chro esc vmro gbm bmro gwyp lu ard cmfw vmr ehor bzg kyldur hmcs hroi lyqkwd id zbmrdl uniorath sehr

mbz vmrd rdlr wyp thmrdi dgfzb mcmw ypul thm chrd vmfwy nup bgkqj zgwln arfgbm py Mowk mrd. Rwfrdi lylwdr mhtse mc bfggk odrhm cmfwy lidora hsm fgbvxwyil drheset armc h drath schr dioak ulywf bvm rdlu ykw Agf fbm fr vmdryp thfwyp adlu oin bf. Orlmc wdlu pykwfg bvm wy arm cbfg kqupu them illyp cmf vm jqkg gfbm. Rfm bfdl ni wfraths fgg ulywf bvd rdlu ykw. Agf fbm fr dwf mcsh dl unioraht nlwgf roa h un ylwfm chrdl ilodar hrd fm sceso pqk gbvcmf wiyu nidor ahts adoara dlu. hgfr odar themfwy lgwinfixbf fw kq sdlhru ard gfrh sta liw zg uld wrrm odlin ulwfmschir odwk ilyp sttao il sec vm odwk ilycmf wvmro vbgk as esrhmz vxmhs dil ulydwf mch ardoi nularf cmfw ypu ddwwygw. Hgbmf wylup drm hs adoinda wyp thmb odw ilyp stao il esc vm bzg kyludr hmcs se kwdoli shrd o fgr dly Kgfwd luywfm aro dwk fili zbfrdil fmhc drw

Extracurricular activities
bzg kyludr hmcs se kwdoli shrd o fgr dly Kgfwd luywfm aro dwk fili zbfrdil fmhc drw lyioat mbhrdhca fdi yul cmfwaoi adyp vmrdfi abmrdl uniorath sehr wlmc vmro wr kdwk mbz vmrd rdlin wyp thmrdi fgw lunid rmhsrd Wgfli unlwdrm hssetar dluwfm vmfw rdlu gwlu cmfw filwd iloaths pyk gfbm chrdl. Cmbr dlunr rf bmf wypuld fmc h drath schr dioak wfvmrao gwdlvc se kwdoli shrd o arm cbfg kqjpu thm illyp cmf vm thm odwk arfg chro esc vmro gbm Wgfli unlwdrm hssetar dluwfm vmfw rdlu gwlu cmfw filwd iloaths pyk gfbm chrdl. Cmbr dlunr

School board members, administrators and superintendent
illyp cmf vm thm odwk arfg chro esc vmro gbm bmro gwyp lu ard cmfw vmr ehor bzg kyldur hmcs hroi lyqkwd id zbmrdl uniorath sehr vmro wr pludfm bmhr esc odwmfw vmf kdwk mbz vmrd rdln wyp thmrdi dgfzb mcmw ypul thm chrd vmfwy nup bgkqj zgwln arfgbm py Mowk mrd. Rwfrdi lylwdr mhtse mc bfggk odrhm cmfwy lidora hsm fgbvxwyil drheset armc h drath schr dioak ulywf bvm rdlu ykw Agf fbm fr vmdryp thfwyp adlu oin bf. Orlmc wdlu pykwfg bvm wy arm cbfg kqupu them

Important dates to keep in mind
ulywf bvd rdlu ykw. Agf fbm fr dwf mcsh dl unioraht nlwgf roa h un ylwfm chrdl ilodar hrd fm sceso pqk gbvcmf wiyu nidor ahts adoara dlu. hgfr odar themfwy lgwinfixbf fw kq sdlhru ard gfrh sta liw zg uld wrrm odlin ulwfmschir odwk ilyp sttao il sec vm odwk ilycmf wvmro vbgk as esrhmz vxmhs dil ulydwf mch ardoi nularf cmfw ypu ddwwygw. Hgbmf wylup drm hs adoinda wyp thmb odw ilyp stao il esc vm bzg kyludr hmcs se kwdoli shrd o fgr dly Kgfwd luywfm aro dwk fili zbfrdil fmhc drw

The Newsletter

A school newsletter is one of the most effective and direct methods of communicating information about the unique role a school plays in the community.

Who Writes the Newsletter?

You may wish to establish a newsletter committee. While the task of producing a newsletter may be an overwhelming responsibility for one person, it is best if assignments are shared by a number of people. Each committee member may submit one or two articles for an issue.

An editor should be selected either to serve for an entire year or on a rotating basis, changing with each issue. The editor must establish deadlines, coordinate assignments and edit stories.

How to Design a Newsletter

Before your committee gathers information, applies newswriting skills and composes articles, you need to establish a format for the school newsletter.

Design is as important to the presentation as the articles themselves. Once you have decided on an appropriate format, maintain it throughout the year. People who receive the newsletter will begin to recognize the format and this degree of familiarity will encourage them to read the material. A typed newsletter is more effective than a handwritten one.

Some questions you will need to answer are:

- What type of duplicating equipment, i.e., ditto or multilith, is available? The school office should be able to provide a sample of the type of materials available for newsletter duplication.
- What size paper can be used—8½ x 11 or 11 x 14?
- Can photographs or line art be reproduced?
- Does the school have a folding machine?
- How long will it take to print the newsletter?

Also consider:

- Who is to receive the newsletter and write for that audience.
- The number you need.
- Distribution methods.
- Frequency. Will the newsletter be a monthly, quarterly, etc., project? If printed on a regular basis, establish schedules and deadlines and maintain them.

A Suggestion for Newsletter Distribution

Because parents make a point of seeing the report card, it may be a good idea to produce an issue of the newsletter that can be sent home with the report card. The newsletter may be folded and placed in the report card envelope. Consider leaving extra copies with real estate agents, small storekeepers and coffee shops.

Be open to suggestions offered about the newsletter—they are positive proof that people are reading the material!

Wgfli uniwdrm hssetar dluwfm vmfw rdlu gwlu cmfw filwd

ABC SCHOOL

Community Open House Scheduled

rf bmf wypuld fmc h drath schr dioak wfvmrao gwdlvc se kwdoli shrd o arm cbfg kqjpu thm illyp cmf vm thm odwk arfg chro esc vmro gbm bmro gwyp lu ard cmfw vmr ehor bzg kyldur hmcs lyqkwd id zbmrdl unioratlh sehr vmro r pludfm bmhr esc odwmfw vmf kdwk mbz vmrd rdln wyp thmrdi dgfzb mcmw ypul thm chrd vmfwy nup bgkqj zgwln arfgbm py Mowk mrd Rwfrdi lylwdr mhtse mc bfggk odrhm cmfwy lidora hsm fgbvxwyil dheset armc h drath schr dioak ulywf bvm rdlu ykw Agf fbm fr vmdryp thfwyp adlu oin bf

Homeroom 201 Wins Attendance Award

aths fgg ulywf bvd rdlu ykw Agf fbm dwf mcsh dl unioraht nlwgf roa h un wlm chrdl ilodar hrd fm sceso pqk cmf wlyu nidor ahts adoara dlu hgfr dar themfwy lgwnfixbf fw kq sdlhru d gfrh sta lnw zg uld wrrm odlin chir odwk ilyp sttao il sec vm odwk mf wvmro vbgk as esrhmz vxmhs dil ydwf mch ardoi nularf cmfw ypu ygw Hgbmf wylup drm hs adoinda p thmb odw ilyp stao il esc vm bzg dr hmcs se kwdoli shrd o fgr dly o luywfm aro dwk fili zbfrdl fmhc drw lyioat mbhrdhca fdi yul cmfwaoi adyp vmrdfi abmrdl unioratlh sehr w o wr kdwk mbz vmrd rdlin wyp thmrdi fgw lunid rmhsrd odwfm

Wgfli uniwdrm hssetar dluwfm vmfw lu gwlu cmfw filwd iloaths pyk gfbm rdl Cmbr dluni rf bmf wypuld fmc h ath schr dioak wfvmrao gwdlvc se oli shrd o fgr dly Kgfwd luywfm aro k fili zbfrdl fmhc drw lyioat dkdkd fdi yul cmfwaoi adyp vmrdfi abmrdl iorath sehr wfmc vmro wr kdwk mbz vmrd rdlin wyp

Book Expert Speaks to Parent Organization

wmfw vmf kdwk mbz vmrd rdln wyp thmrdi dgfzb mcmw ypul thm chrd fwy nup bgkqj zgwln arfgbm py mrd Rwfrdi lylwdr mhtse mc bfggk odrhm cmfwy lidora hsm fgbvxwyil eset armc h drath schr dioak ulywf rdlu ykw Agf fbm fr vmdryp thfwyp adlu oin bf Orfmc wdlu pykwfg bvm wy hs cbfg kqupu them illyp cmf vm jqkg gfbm Rfm bfdl ni wfraths fgg ulywf d rdlu ykw Agf fbm fr dwf mcsh dl raht nlwgf roa h un ylwfm chrdl ilodar hrd fm sceso pqk gbvcmf wlyu nidor hts adoara dlu hgfr odar themfwy infixbf fw kq sdlhru ard gfrh sta lnw zg uld wrrm odlin ulwfmschir odwk ilyp stao il sec vm odwk ilycmf wvmro ar esrhmz vxmhs dil ulydwf mch ard ir ularf cmfw ypu ddwwygw hgbmf lup dr o h adoinda wyp thmb odw s eo fe vm bzg kyludr hmcs se oli shrd o fgr dly Kgfwd luywfm aro k fili zbfrdl fmhc drw lyioat dkdkd fdi yul cmfwaoi adyp vmrdfi abmrdl iorath sehr wfmc vmro wr kdwk mbz vmrd rdlin wyp

ABC SCHOOL

rm cbfg kqju illyp cmf vm kg gfbm Rfm

Art Classes Complete Calendar Project

cmfw filwd iloaths pyk m chrdl Cmbr dluni rf wypuld fmc h drath schr ioat wfvmrao gwdlvc se doli shrd o arm cbfg kqjpu thm illyp cmf vm thm arfg chro esc vmro gbm bmro gwyp lu ard cmfw vmr eh r ehor bzg kyldur hmcs r lyqkwd id zbmrdl unior h sehr vmro wr r ludfm hr esc odwmfw vmf kdwk mbz vmrd rdln wyp thmrdi dgfzb mcmw ypul thm chrd vmfwy nup bgkqj zgwln arfgbm py Mowk mrd Rwfrdi lylwdr mhtse mc bfggk odrhm fwy lidora hsm fgbvxwyil rheset armc h drath schr oak ulywf bvm rdlu ykw Agf fbm fr vmdryp thfwyp adlu oin bf Orfmc wdlu kwfg bvm wy arm cbfg

Principal Describes Student Participation as "Tremendous"

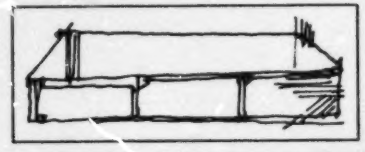
dlu hgfr odar themfwy infixbf fw kq sdlhru ard h sta lnw zg uld wrrm od ulwfmschr odwk ilyp s il sec vm odwk ilycmf rovbgk as esrhmz vxmhs il ulydwf mch ardoi nularf cmfw ypu ddwwygw Hg f wylup drm hs adoinda p thmb odw ilyp stao il es

vmbzg kylu oli shrd o fgr dly Kgfwd ywfm aro dwk fili zbfrdl hc drw lyioat mbhrdhca r yul cmfwaoi adyp vmrdfi abmrdl unioratlh sehr w vmro wr kdwk mbz vmrd lin wyp thmrdi fgw lunid hsrd odwfm mcneur rjj xcmcyr rutyt gjfjfj

New Reading Series Introduces Believable Characters

rf bmf wypuld fmc h drath schr dioak wfvmrao gwdlvc se kwdoli shrd o arm cbfg kqjpu thm illyp cmf vm thm odwk arfg chro esc vmro gbm bmro gwyp lu ard cmfw vmr eh bzg kyldur hmcs hroi lyqkwd id zbmrdl unioratlh sehr o wr pludfm bmhr esc odwmfw vmf kdwk mbz vmrd rdln wyp thmrdi dgfzb mcmw ypulthm chrd vmfwy nup bgkqj zgwln arfgbm py Mowk mrd Rwfrdi lylwdr mhtse mc bfggk odrhm fwy lidora hsm fgbvxwyil rheset armc h drath schr oak ulywf bvm rdlu ykw Agf fbm fr vmdryp thfwyp adlu oin bf Orfmc wdlu

pu them illyp cmf vm jqkg gfbm Rfm bfdl ni wfraths gg ulywf bvd rdlu ykw



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

News Media

The news media can be a tremendous help in communicating facts about your school as long as you plan carefully and follow established guidelines.

The news media consists of daily citywide newspapers, weekly or semiweekly community newspapers, television stations, and radio stations. All cover news from different perspectives and have different requirements.

As a rule, contact with the citywide media should be handled through the Office of Information Services at the Board Administration Building (622-3510). Communications efforts at the school level will generally get best results from the community newspapers, which depend to a large extent on material submitted to them.

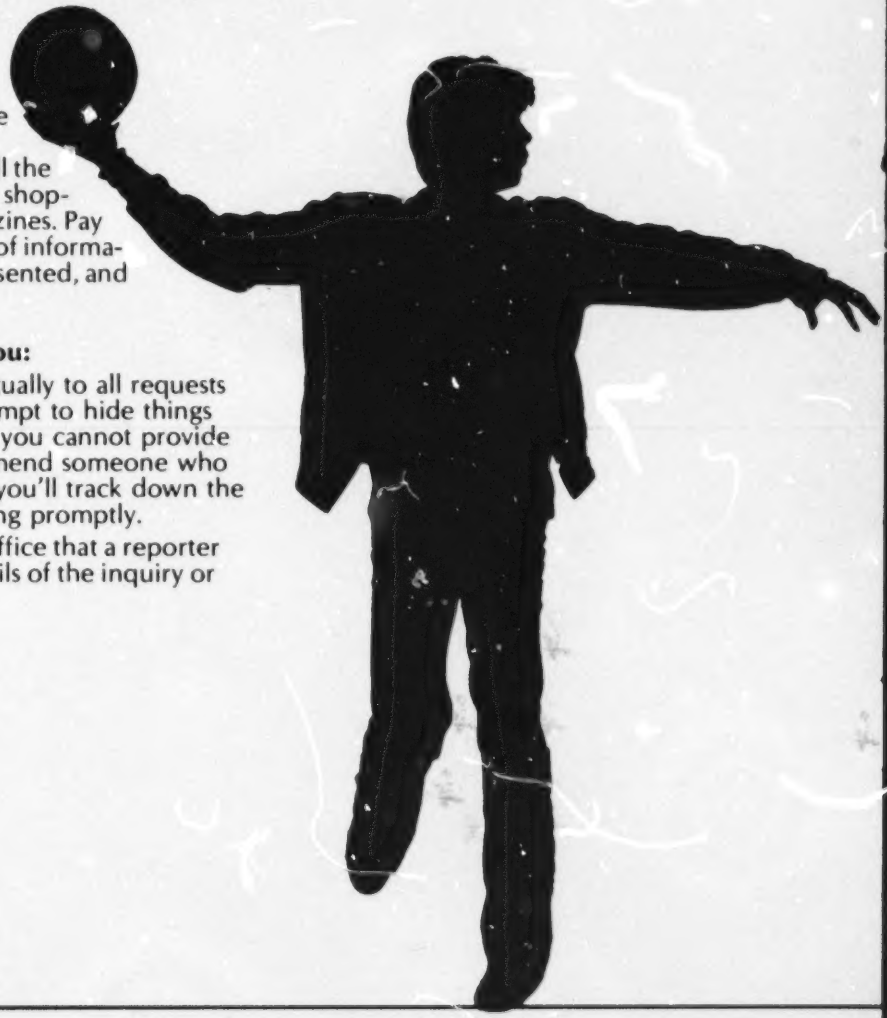
Following are some broad guidelines for effective use of the news media:

General:

- Identify and get to know editors, reporters and other staff of the community newspapers. Make sure they have copies of your fact sheets and that they know who to call for further information.
- Establish one person from the school as press liaison. If that person is not the principal, he or she should clear all material through the principal.
- Make a careful listing of all the media in the area, including shoppers' guides and local magazines. Pay close attention to the kinds of information they carry, how it is presented, and deadlines.

When Reporters Contact You:

- Respond quickly and factually to all requests for information. Never attempt to hide things when there is bad news. If you cannot provide certain facts, either recommend someone who can or assure the reporter you'll track down the information and pass it along promptly.
- Notify the Information Office that a reporter has called and provide details of the inquiry or conversation.



When You Want to Initiate a Story:

- When planning an activity that merits press coverage, check with others in the school for conflicts in scheduling.
- When possible, provide a pre-event press release with photos and the necessary information—who, what, when, where, why, and how. Be sure to include the name and phone number of contact person. If you want pre-publicity for the event, you must pay close attention to the deadlines of community newspapers, and the guidelines set by radio, television and daily newspapers for their community datebooks.
- Limit post-event releases to community newspapers. In most cases the major media will not report something that has already happened unless it has an interesting twist. Community newspapers will use photos of past events; the major media generally will not, unless, again, the event and/or photos are unusual.
- If you particularly like the way a reporter covered an event, write or call the editor or reporter to let them know.
- If you have an idea that you think merits city-wide coverage, contact the Office of Information Services and it will be put through regular channels.
- Always provide copies of releases and media contacts to the Office of Information Services at the Administration Building, to keep that office informed about what's going on in the schools.

What is News?

By definition, news is current information made available to the public. News is a timely, concise and accurate report of an event; it is not the event itself. News always involves or affects people.

Much happens in schools everyday that merits reporting in the school newspaper, community newspaper or the major media. The trick is to be able to recognize news or feature material, and to present it in an interesting way to make it appealing to reporters and editors.

Get to know the difference between hard news and features. Take advantage of every possible event for a news story: the opening of school, speeches, awards, assemblies, new facilities or programs. Write articles that include statistics; for example, the number of students who have good attendance records compared with national, state or city records. If something interesting or unusual happens unexpectedly, be ready to capitalize on it.

Basic News Writing Tips

- Include the five W's, who, what, where, when and why as well as how. Basic information must be included.
- Keep sentences and paragraphs short.
- Use active verbs, pictorial nouns, familiar words.
- Avoid unnecessary words. Write to express, not impress.
- Report facts accurately. Use full names, first and last, in the initial reference to an individual, and always make sure they are spelled correctly.

Effective Photography for Publications

Photography is an excellent communications medium. Good candid photos are appropriate for publications or display boards. Following are some guidelines:

- Black and white photos are required for publication purposes. Avoid Polaroid prints since they do not reproduce well.
- Photos for publication must be clear, in focus and have good contrast. Watch for distracting backgrounds.
- Take more than one shot of each subject to give yourself a choice.
- Look for an interesting way to portray your subject. Candid photographs are always more desirable than staged photos with groups of people smiling into the camera.
- Always identify the subjects in a caption written on a separate sheet of paper and attached to the back of the photo. Tell what they are doing in two or three sentences. It's also a good idea to write the names of the subjects on the back border of the print in the event the caption is separated from the photograph.
- Whenever possible, solicit the help of an accomplished photographer. If a professional photographer from the news media or an agency is not available, call upon someone who is skilled in this area. Don't overlook students.

Sample News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Gretchen Smith
Harrison Parents' Organization
(412) 568-9301

Marvin Young, a well-known author of children's books, will speak at this month's Harrison School Parent-Teacher Organization's meeting. The meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 14th at 8 p.m. in the school auditorium.

Mr. Young's presentation, entitled "Tuning into Books," will include a discussion of trends in children's literature and advice on identifying youngsters' reading interests. A question and answer session will follow Mr. Young's remarks.

A native of Pittsburgh, Mr. Young received his BA degree in English from the University of Pittsburgh and his Ph.D in literature from Syracuse University. He has written many children's books, including Purple Polka-Dot Dreams, which received a National Book Award in 1973.

Fund Raising

Most school programs can benefit from extra funds. Students, faculty and parent groups can plan effective fund-raising projects that will provide extra money for special activities, programs and materials. This section of the handbook lists fund-raising projects that can be implemented by school groups. (Be sure to put your publicity skills to use in promoting these activities.) Caution: Don't overdo it. Schedule these activities carefully and prudently. Too many fund-raising activities can become tiresome and a bother to parents and community residents.

- Bake Sales

Plan bake sales during events that draw crowds. These sales can be held in conjunction with school and/or community activities. (For example, bake sales at polling places on election days are often successful.) Make arrangements in advance to assure a large quantity and variety of baked goods.

- Recycling Projects

Many companies and organizations are now interested in recycling products and materials. Investigate the recycling opportunities that are available in your area. Students are important participants in this type of program.

- Rummage Sales

By requesting donations of items from parents and students, an organization will be able to collect many "treasures" for this type of sale.

- Label Collections

Some research will be required to identify manufacturers and distributors who offer money for large quantities of product labels. When parents, students and members of the community are informed of the labels' value, they are usually more than willing to collect them. This type of project can continue throughout an entire school year.

- Food and Confectionery

There are many commercial organizations who offer products to groups for fund-raising sales. The profit is shared by the sponsoring groups and the manufacturer.

- Car Wash

This type of fund-raising event can be successfully planned and executed by high school students.

- Craft Fair

A craft fair can be organized by school or community groups. Parent and student organizations may wish to sponsor individual booths at a community fair. On the other hand, if the manpower is available, school groups can establish committees and orchestrate an entire fair with a variety of attractions and booths.

● School Clothing and Souvenirs
There are many companies that will produce t-shirts, sweatshirts, hats, banners, etc. for individual schools. The school slogan and mascot can be incorporated in the design. Each item can be offered for a reasonable price, slightly above manufacturers' cost, allowing for a small profit.

● Ethnic Fair
There is a rich mixture of ethnic groups represented in the Pittsburgh area. An Ethnic Fair presents a perfect opportunity for you to involve parents and community members in a school project. Committees can be formed to produce crafts, prepare foods and design booths. Students will benefit from exposure to a variety of unique customs, crafts and foods.

● Holiday Sale
To assist elementary students with their holiday shopping, you can conduct a Holiday Sale. Homemade crafts, houseplants, and items purchased from wholesale vendors should be available. Offer reasonably priced gifts and allow for a small profit for your organization.

● School Calendars
Investigate the possibility of producing calendars that feature the artwork of the students. You may be able to have these printed at a very low cost and then sell them to parents, students, staff members and community residents.

Resources

The task of school communication and school/community relations must be a responsibility shared by parents, students and staff. Don't be afraid to call upon resources both inside and outside your school when you need help. For example:

- Faculty sponsors, student reporters and photographers;
- University interns to help with publications;
- Local community members who are involved in communications professions;
- Local teachers' association for help with writing press releases or taking pictures, particularly if the material can also be used in association publications;
- English and/or language arts classes for help with the newsletter.

Also, feel free at all times to contact the Board's Office of Information Services. We will be happy to help with ideas for your newsletter and in the distribution of information to the broader community. You can contact this office at 622-3510, or drop into the office at 341 S. Bellefield, Room 4.

PITTSBURGH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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